

# NIGERIA AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

**BACKGROUND:** Nigeria is Africa's most populated country. Its population has more than tripled from 1960 with 38 million to roughly 120 million in 1999. Nigeria's population is expected to surpass 200 million by 2025. National contraceptive prevalence is less than 10% and total fertility is over 6 children per woman. According to the 1990 Demographic and Health Survey, unmet need for family planning exceeds 20 percent.

## **STATISTICS:**

- Estimates suggest that maternal mortality is rising. Nigeria has a high ratio of 1,000 deaths/100,000 live births. Currently, the number of maternal deaths is estimated at 60,000 per year. Nigeria has less than 2 percent of the world's population, but it contributes to 10 percent of the world's maternal deaths.
- Thirty percent of women become pregnant by the age of 17 years and 60 percent of abortion-related complications occur in adolescent girls.
- Complications associated with pregnancy are substantial. For every maternal death, there are 15-20 women, who suffer debilitating conditions including obstetric fistula, ruptured uterus, and pelvic inflammatory disease, which results in sterility.
- The widespread practice of female genital cutting contributes to the problem of obstructed labor. The procedure for female circumcision puts girls and women at risk of death and morbidity.

**National Response:** Nigeria adopted a Population Policy in 1988. The Policy calls for reduced population growth and a higher standard of living. In support of this policy, Dr. Tim Menakaya, the current Minister of Health, has stated:

“As we all know, population is a key factor in social and economic development. The quality of the population determines the level and rate of development of each nation. Nigeria, with an estimated population of 110 million (1998), is the most populous country in Africa and among the thirteen poorest countries in the world. The Federal Ministry of Health will implement key strategies which include fertility reduction, maternal and child survival, improvement in the status of women, creation of awareness on need for small family size and poverty alleviation.”

**USAID Response:** Population funding for FY 2000 is \$4 million, which is an increase over FY 1999 levels, but far below the request level and what is needed to support a dynamic response to the unmet need for family planning in Nigeria. USAID, Department of International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID), and United Nations

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Population Fund (UNFPA) are the primary family planning donors in Nigeria. USAID funds provide for training, family planning service delivery, and NGO capacity building as well as efforts to increase people's knowledge of contraception and access to services. USAID supports advocacy activities and awareness training on the adverse impact of rapid population growth on all sectors of the society. Additionally, USAID's program seeks to educate Nigerians on the importance of access to quality family planning services in order to reduce the high maternal and child mortality rates.